

Wesleyan Students Work Hard at Game

By PAMELA GLASS

MIDDLETOWN — They call themselves the "Bees." They run fast, jump high and throw plastic discs through the air.

As members of the Wesleyan University frisbee team, they work on spins and plan strategy against their competitors from eight New England colleges. Like other collegiate teams, the 15 members of the Wesleyan frisbee team hold practice sessions and team conferences, and they can play in regional and national competitions.

The game is fast-moving, and seven players on each team must be good runners as well as good throwers. It is played on a large field, and there are no specific boundaries except two 50-yard end zones. The object of "ultimate Frisbee," as it's called, is to pass the disc to a team member and keep it moving down the field toward the opponent's end zone. A point is scored when a player catches the disc while standing inside an end zone. The team that scores the most points in two 24-minute periods wins the game.

The key to Frisbee play, according to Wesleyan team member Nick Donahue, is good passing and a strong defense. Players must be able to pass well from both sides of their bodies because they cannot run with the disc. The rules say it must be passed soon after it is caught. Defense is

man to man, and demands a lot of running.

"Jocks who say this is a sissy sport don't understand what's involved. Like other sports, it takes speed, coordination and agility, and you've got to be able to run like a madman," Donahue said.

The competition is low-key: there are no referees, and all disputes, fouls and errors are called by the players.

The team members prefer to remain a club and don't want to become part of Wesleyan's physical education program. They fear that varsity-level competition would ruin the purpose of the game. "The essence of the sport is to have fun and not just to win, win, win," Donahue said.

The 4-year-old team now receives \$25 from the student government, but all major expenses are paid for by the members. Members pay for Frisbees, telephone calls to arrange competition, and food and gas when they're on the road.

The Wesleyan team is a member of the Southern New England Conference of Frisbee Teams and competes with teams from Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Last weekend it placed third behind the University of Connecticut and Brown University in the regional tournament at UConn. UConn and Brown will compete in the Eastern National Tournament at Amherst next weekend. The winner will be sent to the Rose Bowl to play the best team from the Western Division.



Toss Up

Fred Hewitt of Wesleyan University's Frisbee team leaps but misses a teammate's throw as Wesleyan battles Yale in a match April 15. The team members, who call themselves "Bees," work hard at their sport, but say its object is fun, not just winning games (Ritchie Photo).